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Office of
Employment and Training

insider

A window to the Department for Workforce Investment, Office of Employment & Training
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OET makes changes to benefit its customers

To improve effectiveness and efficiency for its customers, OET has recently reorganized the agency into two divisions. The restructuring from three divisions to two follows an external and internal study of the agency that has seen a significant reduction in its workforce over the last decade.

In the early 1990's, approximately 1,300 employees staffed the agency compared to less than 700 today. However, OET's partnerships with other agencies through the one-stop system and upgrades in technology have made it possible to continue to effectively serve its customers. OET Executive Director Penny R. Armstrong said, "Although the agency is operating with significantly fewer staff than in the '90's, we want to maintain or improve on the current activity levels. We truly feel that this change will build on and enhance current efforts."

Below are statistics reported by OET in 2004 indicating the level of activity in four of the various programs and services provided by OET and its partners:

- 276,611 active job seekers
- 128,458 entered employment
- 82,589 job openings received
- 282,015 claims filed for unemployment insurance

The Division of Workforce and Employment Services will replace the Division of Field Services and the Division of Workforce Services. Susan Craft, formerly Director of Workforce Services, will head up the new division and will be responsible for the 28 OET field offices, customer services and other program operations.

There are no structural changes planned for the second division, Unemployment Insurance. Janet Clayborne, director, will continue to oversee the Appeals, Benefits, Technical Services, Tax Status and Accounting, and Tax Audit and Enforcement Branches.

New labor representative appointed to Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission

Governor Ernie Fletcher recently appointed Katherine F. Peppiatt to serve as the labor representative on the Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission (KUIC). Peppiatt will serve the remainder of an unexpired term ending July 26, 2008.

Peppiatt did her undergraduate work at Vanderbilt University and attended graduate school at the University of Kentucky, where she received her degree in school psychology. She has worked as a school psychologist in the Fayette County Public School system.



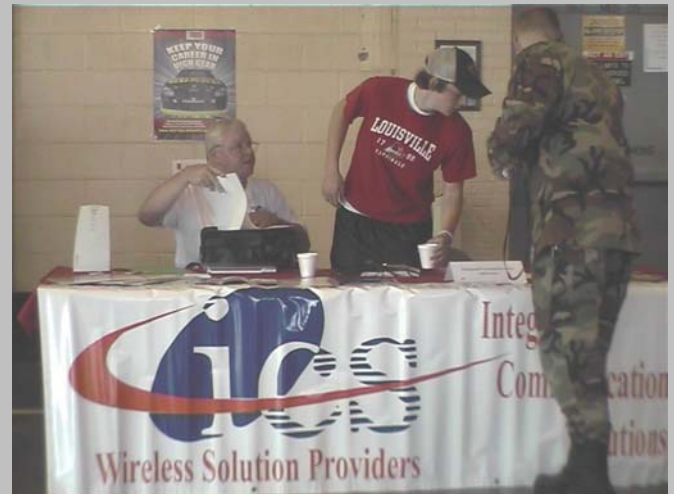
A new associate commissioner was recently appointed to the Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission. Shown at a recent meeting are Barbara Haas, associate commissioner representing industry, seated left, and recently appointed Katherine F. Peppiatt, representing labor, seated right. Also pictured, standing left to right, are OET Deputy Executive Director Ron Murphy, KUIC Chairman and Department for Workforce Investment Deputy Commissioner Andrew Fraenhoffer, and OET Executive Director Penny R. Armstrong.

KUIC is the final administrative reviewing authority involving appeals to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims. The commission also holds hearings on UI contribution-related issues.

Job opportunities offered at Louisville armory

Job seekers in Kentuckiana had an opportunity in June 2005 to meet with employers such as United Parcel Service (UPS), Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc., Marriott Louisville Downtown and Summitt Trucking at the Greater Louisville Hiring Fair.

Thirty-eight employers were on hand to take applications and interview applicants for a variety of professional and skilled labor job openings such as security guards, communications installers, truck drivers, computer operators, mechanics and welders. The Small Business Administration was also available in the morning to provide information to individuals who were interesting in starting a business.



Kevin T. Byrne and Williams Evans with Integrated Communications Solutions assist an unidentified guardsman during the Greater Louisville Hiring Fair held June 29 at the Kentucky National Guard Armory in Louisville.

Hector Cruz, local veteran employment representative with Louisville OET, reported that more than 250 job seekers, including many veterans, visited the hiring fair that was held at the Kentucky National Guard Armory.

See Page 6: Job opportunities offered at Louisville

Hart Chamber spotlights Glasgow OET

The Glasgow Office of Employment and Training was recently selected as Hart County Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Week.

Every Wednesday, Barry Symons from the main office in Glasgow visits Hart County to assist individuals seeking employment. Symons is the office's Local Veterans Employment Representative, but is available to assist anyone looking for employment. His office is located in the National Turnpike Building in Munfordville, along with the Department for Community Based Services.

Symons provides information on current job listings in the local area; offers job counseling, job search and referral assistance; plus is available to help with resume development, job application, and interviewing skills. Glasgow also has a variety of resource materials available to individuals free of charge.

Kentucky Receives \$300,000 Workforce Investment Grant

Governor Ernie Fletcher was notified in June by the U.S. Department of Labor that Kentucky will receive a \$300,000 national emergency grant to help workers, businesses and communities affected by the military's 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) plan.

"When BRAC 2005 recommendations were made, our general reaction was that Kentucky was treated fairly," Governor Fletcher said. "These funds will help the state to initiate community planning, ensuring an early response to workers and businesses impacted by these actions."

The funds, earmarked to assist in the realignment of Ft. Knox, will be disbursed by Kentucky's Department for Workforce Investment.

34 Kentuckians win Education at Work Scholarships

Kentucky Education Cabinet Secretary Virginia G. Fox presented the cabinet's Education at Work scholarship to 34 Kentuckians July 21 in the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort. The cabinet gave the \$500 scholarships to students who are pursuing postsecondary education in Kentucky.



2005 Education at Work Scholarship winners with Gov. Ernie Fletcher, center, Department for Workforce Investment Commissioner Laura E. Owens, left of Governor Fletcher, and Education Cabinet Secretary Virginia G. Fox, right of Governor Fletcher.

Secretary Fox said, "It's an honor to recognize the 2005 Education at Work Scholarship winners today. The scholarship winners come from a cross section of Kentucky and represent the hope and spirit of Kentucky. As I read their winning 'Unbridled Spirit' essays, I felt their pride in our state and the hope that they have as they pursue their educational goals and career dreams. I'm encouraged by their sense of purpose and how they want to give back to their communities as they grow and accomplish their varied higher education aspirations."

See Page 4: 34 Kentuckians win Education at Work

Revenue and Workforce collect fraudulent unemployment payments

In a continuing effort to collect outstanding debts owed to the state, Finance and Administration Cabinet Secretary Robbie Rudolph and Department for Workforce Investment (DWI) Commissioner Laura E. Owens announced on June 2 that more than \$65,000 has been recovered in wrongfully collected unemployment benefits as a result of a cooperative effort between the Department of Revenue and the DWI.

In early May, DWI's Office of Employment and Training (OET) sent warning letters to more than 9,000 claimants who had collected a total of \$9.6 million in unemployment benefits to which they were not entitled. The letter advised the claimant that if left unpaid, his case would be turned over to the Department of Revenue for collection if he did not respond within 14 days.

To date, a total of 97 liabilities have been paid in full and OET's benefits branch has received nearly 1,000 phone calls in response to the letter. One hundred and thirty-five payment plans have been established with another 375 payment arrangements pending at this time.

DWI's statutory authority to collect debt is limited and past efforts to recover these fraudulently claimed unemployment benefits had been largely ignored. Prior to the notice mailed on May 4, claimants had received three bills requesting payment and a final demand letter threatening a lien.

The Department of Revenue now has enhanced authority to assist other state agencies and local governments with the collection of delinquent taxes and fees and the recovery of wrongfully received payments, thanks to statutory changes enacted by the legislature in 2004.

See Page 6: Revenue and Workforce collect

34 Kentuckians win Education at Work (continued)

About 200 Kentuckians applied for the seventh annual scholarship competition. Including this year, the cabinet has awarded 180 scholarships totaling \$90,000 for postsecondary education. The scholarship began under the former Cabinet for Workforce Development and has grown from 20 scholarships in 1999 to this year's 34 scholarships.

Kentuckians qualified for the scholarship by using one of the services of the Education Cabinet's various agencies. Scholarship applicants were required to write an essay on Kentucky's new 'Unbridled Spirit' brand and how it relates to their educational and career goals. The \$500 scholarships may be used for tuition, books and lab and technology fees.

"Some of our scholarship winners have returned to the classroom after years of being out of school while others are going straight from high school to postsecondary school. Many of these students are overcoming great obstacles to accomplish their goals and this is our way of recognizing their efforts," said Department for Workforce Investment Commissioner Laura E. Owens.

"I also applaud our Department for Workforce Investment employees and service providers who have helped these students and many other Kentuckians succeed in school and the workplace. Many of the scholarship applicants wrote in their essays that the guidance, encouragement and assistance from their Workforce Investment service providers has given them the inspiration and help they need to overcome physical, financial and learning difficulties and earn their degrees," Commissioner Owens said.

Nine of the 34 winners are customers of OET or the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program:

Michelle Good of Oneida is majoring in elementary education at Eastern Kentucky University. Her

See Page 5: 34 Kentuckians win Education at Work

Kentucky UI Appeals Branch receives national recognition

Kentucky's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program has been nationally recognized by a federal UI appeals experts panel in a recent annual review for a high level of quality performance for calendar year 2004.

The Quarterly Self-Evaluations of Unemployment Insurance Appeals Hearing and Decision Quality review by the U.S. Department of Labor shows that the agency far exceeded the requirements of 80 percent of sample cases scoring 85 percent or greater. Kentucky's UI program achieved a 97 percent level of performance during the 12-month period.

Regional Administrator Helen N. Parker, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, wrote, "We are glad to take this opportunity to congratulate Janet Snider and her staff, who worked so diligently to make this performance possible, for a job exceptionally well done." Snider, who has since retired, was the manager of OET's UI Appeals Branch.

Parker continued, "While appeals quality has been maintained in a period of high workload, your agency's appeals time lapse performance, as measured by the Secretary's Standard, continues as one of the best in our region and the nation. It is evident that due process is provided to your UI customers. Both your lower authority [Kentucky UI Appeals Branch] and higher authority [Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission] appeals operations are achieving performance levels for which any state would be proud."

Nearly every action of the Division of Unemployment Insurance affecting an employer or worker may be appealed for review by an impartial referee or hearing officer. The Kentucky UI Appeals Branch reviews appeals from benefit determinations. If either party is dissatisfied with the decision of the referee, a further appeal may be filed with the Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission and, thereafter, through the courts.

34 Kentuckians win Education at Work (continued)

service provider is Linda Hubbard, WIA case manager with the Daniel Boone Development Council in Manchester.

Mona Jacobs of Pippa Passes is studying nursing at Hazard Community and Technical College. Her service provider is Bobbie Slone, WIA case manager with the Leslie, Knott, Letcher, Perry Community Action Agency in Hindman.

Michelle Johnson of Manchester is majoring in elementary education at Eastern Kentucky University. Her service provider is Linda Hubbard.

Melissa Lee of Woodbine is studying nursing at Eastern Kentucky University. Her service provider is Marilyn Coffey, case manager with the Kentucky Communities EOC in Barbourville.

Belinda Nicole Mann of Inez is studying business administration and accounting at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Her service provider is Bonnie Conn, career advisor with the Big Sandy Community Action program in Inez.

Latonia Morrison of Inez is studying nursing at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Her service provider is Bonnie Conn.

William Campbell Nance of Lexington is studying civil engineering technology at Lexington Community College. His service provider is Sharon Woods, WIA Finance Officer with the Barren River Area Development District in Bowling Green.

Vickie Pace of Corbin is majoring in nursing at Somerset Community College. Her service provider is Pamela Taylor, case manager with the Kentucky Communities EOC in Barbourville.

Angie Stith of Florence is a business major at Thomas More College. This is the second year that she has won the scholarship. Her service provider is Betsy Meyers, employment specialist at the one-stop center in Florence.

Harlan OET Office hosts Small Business Seminar

Gary Sperger of the Harlan OET office recently joined forces with Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER's) from Pikeville and Prestonsburg to conduct a regional seminar on "Starting or Maintaining a Business." The seminar emphasized information about government programs that are available to veterans; however, anyone with an interest in starting his/her own business was welcomed.



Pictured are speakers and OET Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) coordinators of the Small Business Seminar that was held at the Jolly Center, Hazard Community and Technical College. Left to right, Gary Sperger, LVER- Harlan OET; John Schornick, consultant for the Kentucky Approving Agency for Veterans Education; Bob Ferguson, Community Trust Bank; William Tatter, SCORE Office-Louisville; Shannon Bryant, LVER- Pikeville OET; Tommie Causey, U.S. Small Business Administration; Jerry McBrayer, LVER- Prestonsburg OET; Regina Becknell, Business Development Associate-Eastern KY MACED; and Allen Steinberg, business consultant-Morehead State University.

Students from Hazard Community College and Technical Center, veterans throughout the region and business representatives attended the seminar and continue to request information from those presenting at the seminar.

Revenue and Workforce collect (continued)

"This is a part of our enterprise-wide effort to collect outstanding debts owed to the commonwealth and we take that charge very seriously," Sec. Rudolph said. "We have and will continue to work aggressively to collect what is owed to the commonwealth in order to reduce the burden on the law-abiding, taxpaying citizens of Kentucky."

By involving the Department of Revenue, a claimant's income tax refunds may be intercepted, liens may be placed against personal property and wages may be garnished.

"We are delighted by this assistance from the Finance and Administration Cabinet," said Commissioner Owens. "In some instances, the amount of benefits wrongfully collected was as small as \$100, but in other situations the amount exceeded \$8,700. Kentucky taxpayers deserve to know that unemployment insurance payments are going to those individuals who truly qualify for them."

Job opportunities offered at Louisville (continued)

OET Executive Director Penny R. Armstrong said, "The Office of Employment and Training has been providing people for jobs and jobs for people for more than 70 years. We appreciated this opportunity to join forces with the Kentucky National Guard, KentuckianaWorks, and Indiana Workforce Development to provide a community service to those individuals who were seeking employment and to employers who needed qualified applicants for their job openings."

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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